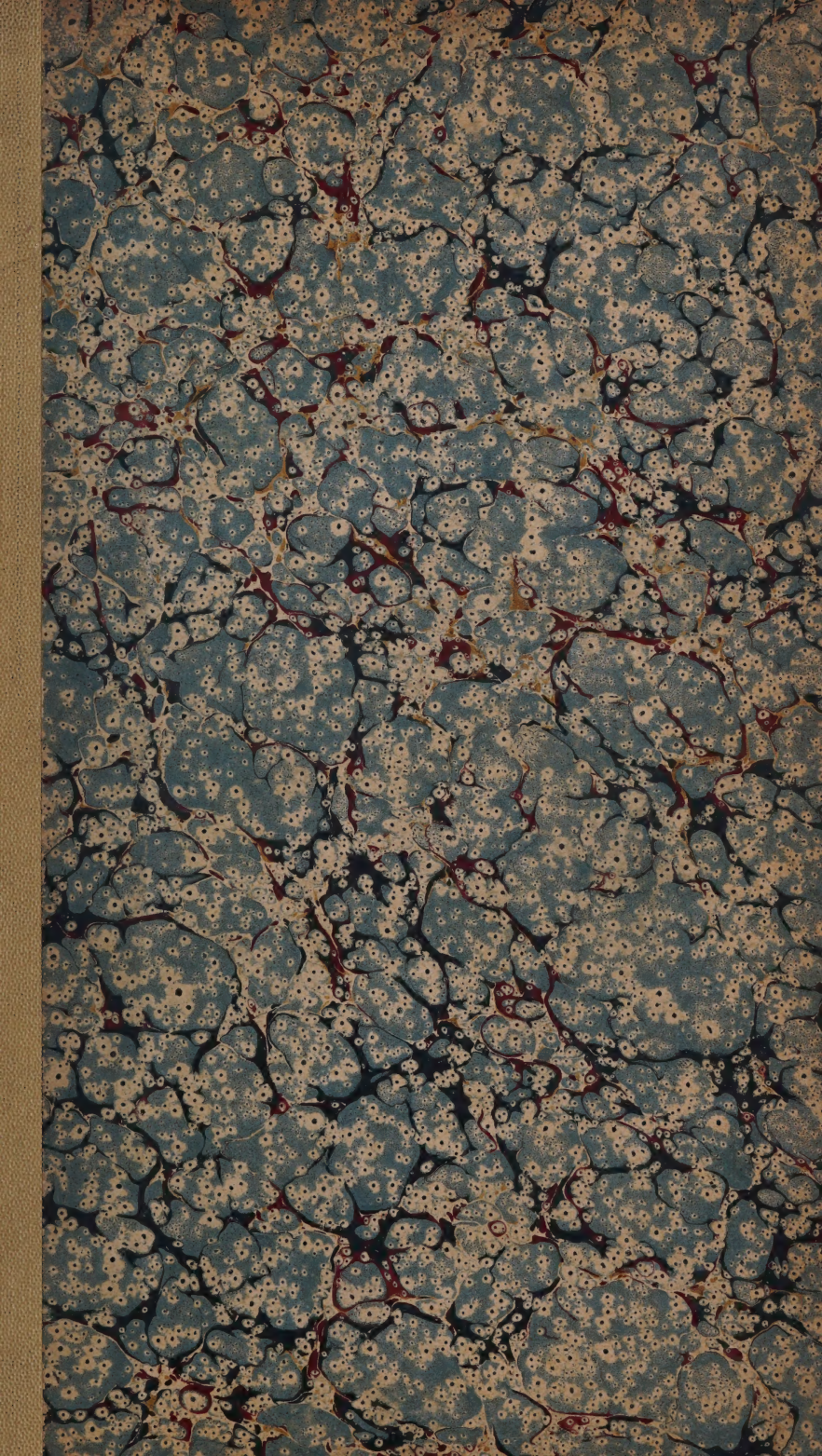




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(ADDRESS, 1841)

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THE HARVARD MUSICAL ASSOCIATION,

AUGUST 25th, 1841,

BY JOHN S. DWIGHT.

*Gentlemen of the Harvard Musical Association,
and Friends of Music :—*

Called upon, at the eleventh hour, to speak in the absence of another, that our anniversary may not want a voice, I cheerfully comply, though it be only to congratulate you on the brightening omens of our cause. Do we not read them in each other's faces, in the spirit which brings you here demanding such a voice, and not content to go away from Alma Mater's annual festival without lingering to place a crown upon the statue of Music, after Learning, Philosophy, Poetry, Religion, convivial Feeling, each, in turn, has had its honor? There is no time to waste in apologies; I try to surrender myself in trustful obedience to the genius of the hour, hoping that it may be given me, out of the heart and impulse of our common feeling, to say some things, not altogether superfluous or foreign to our purpose, concerning Music. A multitude of topics rush upon the mind, which we must take up unceremoniously in the order of their coming, trusting that all the details of our rambling discourse

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will be so steeped in a devout love for music, in a desire to penetrate to its essence and to do the art just honor, as to give them a unity of spirit, if not of form. All that is said will tend, I trust, to show the dignity of music, as an art, and to establish the power, so often claimed for it, of elevating the feelings and ennobling social life.

This, then, is what we have to discuss: *The true office and dignity of Music*. Alas! that we are obliged to discuss it; to bring our feeble speech to the aid of a language in itself so much more glorious! to try to heighten its eloquence by thoughts and words, when thought and speech leave off where it begins, just as the face of the earth grows dark as soon as the stars begin to shine! to interpret music, which is the language of heaven, the language of the Infinite, by words, which are the language of the Finite! It is like going out with a candle to see the moon. How much better, if music could unseal her own lips here, and let her spell come over us in some sublime chorus of Handel, or symphony of Beethoven, or were it only some humble, heartfelt national melody! Then should she, like wisdom, be "justified of her children."

But there are many things, with us, to weaken the force of any appeal which Music, through the performance of her sublimest works, might make. To say nothing of our comparatively few opportunities of hearing music of the highest kind, and worthily performed; of the neglect of a general cultivation not only of a taste but even of an ear for music; there is the want of sufficient reverence for music as an art, which prevents and makes impossible any full and effectual manifestation of its power among us. This low appreciation of the dignity of music as an art, is due, in a great measure, to the current distinction between *sacred* and *secular* music. Not that there is no distinction; not that the same strains are equally suited to the church and to the ball-room; or that it is good taste or good sense to apply the words of a hymn to the melody of "Auld Lang Syne," or "Bonnie Doon." But the nature of the distinction, such as it is, is wrongly indicated by these words; it is made by far too wide, more with reference to accidental associations, customs and circumstances connected with music, than to its own essential meaning. This operates in two ways to the disadvantage of the art. All that it calls secular or profane it virtually excommunicates thereby from the circle of pure and holy influences, identifies it with whatever is trivial and low, and makes it seem a merit and a mark of piety, at least of prudence, to be innocent of it, and ignore

it altogether, or, at the most, "indulge" in it sparingly, as we do in other recreations which the weakness of the flesh will have. So all time spent in it becomes indulgence, not devotion, — a wandering away from the earnest business of life, and not acquaintance with a higher life. It is an amusement, not a study; it will do to while away an idle hour with, to refresh a weary mind, or extract the sting of sorrow; it well supplies the place of more dangerous excitements, like the bottle and the gambling table; but we may not enter into it seriously; it cannot enrich, ennoble, purify and perfect the powers and sensibilities of man, and make him more a man, as poetry and science do, to which we hold the sacrifice of a life but cheap. At most it belongs to the ornamental, not to the indispensable. It occupies a place in neither of the recognised departments of Labor, of Learning, or of Wisdom; but is consigned, with little ceremony, to that uncertain limbo, never accurately surveyed, where men run to and fro irresponsible, called Taste. On the other hand, by calling certain music, and that only, *sacred*, we give to all, so named, an arbitrary worth which makes its intrinsic merit less consulted; we limit its natural freedom of expression, and reduce it to a form, a ceremony, till it becomes monotonous and dull, and is cherished more from veneration and old habit, than from any love of its own beauty. When "church music" is mentioned, all the stress seems laid upon "church," and little upon "music." The whole significance and charm of the latter is resolved into association, and music, as such, becomes a negative thing, the merest robe or varnish to a hallowed form. Not loved and cherished for its own sake, but only as a customary part of a ritual, it comes to have less and less of music in it; to have no life of its own, but only such as it borrows from the occasion for which it is used, through the instrumentality of that marvellous agent, called Association, which seems, to hear some talk about it, to have the chemical faculty not only of compounding, but also of creating substances. Thus is Music clipped at both ends; secular and sacred run away in opposite directions, each with its half, and Art is left a minus quantity in the middle. That is to say; the music of the church, in its dread of the secular spirit, grows lifeless, dull and cold; the music of the parlor and the street, in its dread of solemn dullness, grows altogether trivial and gay; while true music, conceived in the exalted sense of art, is tolerated in neither place, since it falls under neither head. It is rejected from the church, because, being confounded under one sweeping classifica-

tion with every thing secular, a something not quite sacred seems to appertain to it, and it is unpopular with the multitude, who seek to be amused, but never dream of studying and laying to their heart the deep sense of a symphony, a sonata, or an overture, as they would that of a poem, or a discourse.

Yet as much soul, as much energy of genius, as much depth and earnestness of life, as much fullness of meaning and inexhaustible beauty, may go into the composition of the music, as into that of the poem. All this, however, is left to the enjoyment of a very select few. The whole inner world of a Beethoven, a Weber, a Mozart, all that heaven has communicated to those gifted spirits, and, through them, to the world, in the mysterious language of their art, is a secret with these few, — their undisputed and unenvied enjoyment and prerogative ; — yet a painful enjoyment, which they burn with hopeless longing to share with others. For the best and truest music, that which stirs the deepest chords in us, and wakes the strongest yearnings after a better world of harmony and peace ; that which fills the mind, while heard, with “sober certainty of waking bliss,” and, as its sound dies away upon the ear, leaves its soul behind to mingle with our aspirations, was written neither for purposes professedly sacred, nor for amusement ; but it was the spontaneous utterance of feeling, as much as any poem ; a gushing up as of a fountain without a purpose. Sometimes it happened to push up within the precincts of the church, sometimes in the beaten thoroughfares of the world, sometimes in the theatre of pleasure : that is, sometimes it was written to sacred words, a psalm, or a mass, in the devout mood of the author ; sometimes for money, to keep him from starving ; sometimes it took the shape of the light and elegant waltz, or dazzling divertimento, or entertaining opera, where often it happened that the production proved vastly greater than the occasion, the means far nobler than the end they served ; as is the case with the opera “Don Juan,” by Mozart, and with the “waltzes” of Beethoven, which latter remind us of no dance, unless it be the dances of the heavenly systems, in their sublime career through space, — such their outward form and movement might suggest ; but really, they are moral tragedies and prayers and outgushings of gratitude unutterable by speech ; — they are the happiest and most feeling expression of the deep and earnest life there was burning in that man, and which burns on yet, we trust, in purer spheres than this, where he seemed out of place. But this is wandering. What I want to illustrate, is,

that music is the child of nature, and does not work to order, nor in any traces; that the whole merit, the whole meaning, the whole moral influence of her works, is often altogether independent of the outward occasions which called them into being. Their spirit and essential tendency are not to be confounded with the mere historical circumstances attending their origin and subsequent performance; many pieces are nominally theatrical, nominally sacred, but naturally and really mean more than any name or place can designate. The occasion might call, but the song or the sonata would not come, unless it were already *in being*: that is, unless the inmost life of the composer, all the spiritual juices of his nature, were tending towards such fruit. And often, when an occasion called, the composer answered, not in such strains as were merely called for, but in the choicest life-blood of his soul, in the very heaven-distilled wine of genius, in the readiest natural language of what was in him. If an opera, or a dance, or a mass were ordered, he wrote it in the way of business; but as regards the rest, he wrote not merely what was ordered, but what his own heart loved to sing; for the terms of the order covered only the form, and not the spirit of the thing to be produced, which was for those who had ears to hear and hearts to feel. The works of a man of genius, in any department, are not occasional; or if the works are, the soul of the works is not. Occasions only shake the tree, and the fruit, already ripened, falls. Works of art make their appearance on occasions; but their inward conception and growth, their spirit, style and tone, are results of the whole character and nature of the man; and by the music we know the man, "what manner of spirit he was of." Let not the bigot call it secular, because not written for church service, when, nevertheless, it may all thrill and tremble with the natural, the unprofessed religion of the heart; when it may be a full heart's fond confession, heard and blessed in heaven. And let not the flippant pleasure-hunter, or unideal utilitarian, relaxing from his drudgery awhile, call it artificial, scientific, dull and dirge-like, because it came out of a mind more earnest than his own. But let each, while he cultivates a deep and true life in himself, strive rather to enter into the spirit of the great works of the masters in music, to appreciate them as art, as flowers and fruits of soul, and not as manufactures; and he will find their influence will be to raise him equally above bigotry and above frivolity, to hallow pleasure and to naturalize religion.

The history of music is full of the strangest inconsistencies; it

brings the little and the great together, in close proximity ; and often couples the spectacle of sublime and godlike capacity with the most humiliating weaknesses ; so much so that it argues no narrowness in any one, if he happen to share the unfavorable prejudice with which many look upon all music and composers of music, not expressly dedicated to religion. No wonder he so feels, when he reads for what trivial and low occasions some of the greatest masters labored, to what unhallowed and unwholesome marts they carried their productions, to what silly or licentious words some of the noblest efforts in the opera were set, what unspiritual and merely taking subjects were chosen for many a sublime orchestral work, and with what business-like despatch, with more thought of money than of God, much of the sublimest chant and choral music was thrown off. This I will not here attempt to explain, or to reconcile with what has thus far been advanced concerning the dignity of the art. The same phenomenon will meet us again when we shall have attained to a higher point of view of the whole matter, and then, perhaps, the explanation will come with it. For the present, I only repeat the general proposition, that music has a meaning in itself, independently of any occasion for which it may be written, or of any principle of association. Much of the most popular church music, doubtless, was composed with little conscious devotion, but in the way of business, because the church, kind patroness of all the arts, opened the most inviting market to the composer. This holds most true, unluckily, of the noblest forms of sacred music, such as we hear most seldom in our land, such as are only known to the cathedral. While much of the plainer psalmody which we do hear, and which piety sanctions, which the mere grammarian in music can manufacture, and any body can perform, is dull and monotonous and uninspiring, and does not reach the heart. It is practised more because it is a branch of public worship and associated with the church, than because it is music ; it is loved more for old association's sake than for its intrinsic merit ; more because it is *the* music of our childhood and of our fathers, and the best that ever greeted our ears, than because it has the warmth and glow of genius. Compare it with a Scotch song, or with those so called " waltzes " of Beethoven, and which, (taking into account only the intrinsic power of the music,) moves the soul most deeply ? On the other hand, how much of the music which we call secular, is all instinct with the sublimest, tenderest, holiest sentiment ? Are not, for instance, some of the adagio movements, scat-

tered through the instrumental works of Beethoven, almost the very essence of prayer? — not formal prayer, I grant, but earnest, deep, unspeakable aspiration? Is not his music pervaded by such prayer? When we hear it and are so moved by it, what account can we give of it, except to say that in it all our deepest yearnings are expressed; that while our ears drink in its gliding, gushing, crowded harmonies, every deepest sentiment within us, which has never felt at home in this world of the finite and the artificial, this world of narrowness and ignorance and strife, is visited with a sweet home-sympathy, with an assurance that there *is* that in the world that corresponds to it? Yes! we have faith in our best thoughts, our secret hopes, when they come back to us in music. Does not his harmony affect us, just as when we look up to the stars in a clear night, and are filled with awe, as well as with unspeakable longing, and with a consciousness that our true home's not here, — that there is another and an unseen world which only the heart knoweth, and which the pure in heart shall enter, though they are not of the successful ones after the world's way? Or rather, (to make our comparison more characteristic of that individual composer,) we will suppose it *not* a clear night, but one in which the sublimity is heightened by masses of black clouds, moving and drifting over the sky, while the moon and the stars look out so true and calm between, or seem to sail and glide in and out from their dark havens, — clouds and storms, as of a restless, heaven-storming, Titan soul, with sweetest vistas of clear heaven beyond, — clouds and storms of earnest aspiration, it may be of momentary doubt, relieving the to us monotonously clear, blue, boundless firmament of Faith. If "sacred" means elevating, purifying, love and faith-inspiring, then nearly all the secular works of the masters are sacred. They shed a sacred influence over our minds; they make us conscious of new worlds within us; they bring out the glow and grandeur of the world around us; they open a new communication between our hearts and nature, and assert the present Deity, without name, without creed. Many of you are familiar with the operatic music of Bellini. What purity, what tenderness, what depth of love and filial piety breathe in every strain, in every little symphony between the airs! I have sat under his spell, and then gone forth and seen this old dull world of ours, (which only our own dullness makes dull,) suddenly light up and wear a new aspect, all alive with beauty, with friendliness and sympathy, for *me*, as if the smile of a Father was what its beauty meant. When I think of this,

and when I think what spiritual nourishment I have drunk from the secular piano-forte, from the orchestra, or from the midnight serenade, I feel that music is wronged by these words "secular" and "sacred." In proportion to the depth and tenderness of my gratitude to such a benefactress, to whom I owe so much, who has infused, as it were, a new element all around me and under me, and buoyed my life up above worldliness and doubt and fear, is my sensitiveness to such language. It pains me to hear the distinction alluded to; not because it is not good enough in its place, but because it conveys so many misconstructions, because it wrongs and degrades a noble art, and because it discovers, on the part of the lover of music, a poor and low conception of his art, as of a thing which needs to be sanctified. Does not many a true lover of music share this feeling with me?

So much in justice to actual impressions received in hearing music now and then. The experience is irreconcilable with the meaning conveyed by the indiscriminate use of the terms "secular" and "sacred." Let us now go further, and seek a deeper reason in the philosophy of the thing. Let us try to penetrate, though with feeble force of thought, into the inmost nature and essence of music, — consider what it stands for, what its final cause, and contemplate it in its highest and truest office, as one of the natural influences by which we live and grow and accomplish our great destiny. I hazard the assertion, that *music is all sacred*; that music in its essence, in its purity, when it flows from the genuine fount of art in the composer's soul, when it is the inspiration of his genius, and not a manufactured imitation, when it comes unforced, unbidden from the heart, is a divine minister to the wants of the soul. I know it is often put to low uses; it is often composed without inspiration, like doggerel poetry, patched up out of floating common-places, and only conformed to the rules of harmony and rhythm, — the body without the soul of music. Because in this, as in all arts, where there is one genius, there are a hundred imitators, where one has the spirit, a hundred have the knack of producing the form. But music which is original, which rises to the dignity of art, is holy; it cannot profane any mind, or any place; it can be profaned by the levity, yes, and by the unfelt, feigned solemnity with which it is performed or written; but it came itself from heaven. To me, music stands for the highest outward symbol of what is most deep and holy, and most remotely to be realized in the soul of man. It is a sort of Holy Writ; a prophecy of

what life is to be ; the language of our presentiments ; the rainbow of promise translated out of seeing into hearing. This may sound extravagant and sentimental. But no less could I say in justice to sincere experience ; it is confession which one, "smit with the love of sacred song," is bound to make, and not a play of fancy, which he might withhold.

I have already spoken several times incidentally of music as Art, as Language, and as Prophecy. A few words now on each of these heads.

1. Not every musician is an artist. Skill, tact, science, fall short of this high distinction. Yet we confound the eternal work of art and the merest superficiality, composed by rule or memory, under one term, music. Let it be understood that, in all our high claims for music thus far, we have had reference, not to the mere medium of expression, to the agreeable combinations and successions of sound, which we call music, but to the *music from the soul*, expressing itself through that medium, through those melodies and harmonies ; — not to the mere verbal and rhythmical dress of the poem, but to the poetry of it. Amongst all the numberless varieties of things which may be played and sung, there is much which claims to be music for a greater reason than that it is capable of being played and sung ; for the reason, namely, that it is full of soul and meaning, and comes from an equal inspiration with the highest works of art, in painting, sculpture, or poetry. A true work of music stands for as much life, and is as much the word of a great soul, as is an Iliad, or a Paradise Lost. But poetry, which is no poetry, we can call rhyme ; eloquence, which is uninspired, we can call speech ; music we must call music, whether it be a jig, or a Messiah ; and there is no term to distinguish among mere melodies and harmonies conformed to rule, those which also contain meaning, originality, and the spirit of true art. A great many compositions bear the same relation to the high art-standard of music which the rhymed common-places in the corner of a newspaper bear to poetry, or which mere speech bears to eloquence.

What is art ? is not easily answered. Yet the word is understood, where its presence has been felt, by any one who has felt the difference between an Apollo Belvidere and a tolerably skilful statue from some clever hand. In each of its departments there are several stages or approximations to pure art. Thus, among writers, there is first the one who has merely mastered the language, and who lets

the language or the current literature do his thinking for him. Then there is the one who writes skilfully to some purpose, who knows how to adapt means to an end, to prove, to persuade, to please; such is the popular speaker, lecturer, essayist, satirist, or didactic poet. Then there is the *artist* who creates, who produces a poem or a thought for its own sake, because he is full of it and must give it utterance; it is his own genius which he writes out, and he moulds the language to his use; it is to serve no special end; his work is an end in itself; it has not merely a relative, but an absolute existence; you do not ask *why* it is, but only *what* it is. The first is acquirement; the second, talent; the third, genius. So the painter or sculptor, who succeeds in getting a faithful likeness of a head, is no artist, but only one who has acquired the use of the tools of art. Above him is the skilful designer, who gives you representations or illustrations of historical scenes, or natural objects, or his own fancies. He has talent, yet he is not the artist. The artist, the man of genius, creates. He borrows both his materials and his subject, to be sure; but they are the least part of his picture or his group. He finds a subject in the worship of Apollo, the story of Laocoon, the landscape before him; but that is only the web into which he must put the woof. Talent uses paint and marble to represent a storm. Genius first translates the storm into a painting, and then uses them both to represent its own ideal, — makes both serve its master thought. The works of talent surprise us, and make us think chiefly of the power and skill displayed in their execution. The works of genius overpower us, transport us, fill us with their own spirit, haunt us wherever we go, suggest to us infinitely more than we see, and come over us like the whole heavens, showing us not one thing, but the harmony of all things. The reason for their being lies not in the subject, or passage of history, which they illustrate; we do not have to go out of themselves for it. All traces of the old mythology might be lost; and the Apollo, without a name or clue to its story, would mean as much as it now means. So in Music. With those who work in tones, as with those who work in stone, or brass, or colors, there are all grades of excellence, from manufacture up to art. Do not confound the mechanical *composer* or *maker-up* with the creator or artist, whose music is the exponent and beautiful revelation of his life. Believe, too, that in music itself there is something greater than any thing which it undertakes to illustrate or adorn; that art is greater than its subjects or occasions;

that music has something more to do than to clothe a given thought, or imitate a given scene or story. Its nobler mission is to publish its own secret; to give you, not storms, moonlight, battles, hymns, tragedies, recollections; for those you have, (in the original, which is better than the copy,) but to give you *music*, something which concerns you intimately, and which is not published in any other way. A great deal is said about imitations of nature, or stories of human life, running through music; and there is great joy among the disciples when some such hint, by way of explanation of his meaning in some piece, admired we know not why, can be got from the great master. Not content with enjoying it as music, we ask to have it repeated to us as thought; which is like asking to have the condition of the blessed in another world made visible to eye and ear in this world. To hear music truly, you enter the realm of music, and feel as if all the world was music, and nothing but music; you forget your former state; histories, persons, scenes, thoughts, words, are foreign here; it is not their element; the most you can do will be to say, like Paul, "I know not whether I was in the body or out of the body." Return to the matter-of-fact life of the senses, and ask the composer what he meant, and either he will give no answer, or one that will sadly disappoint you. Importuned for an answer of some sort, he will tell you of any fly of circumstance that chanced to light upon his paper while he wrote, of any stray thoughts, or momentary consciousness of things in the outward world, which chequered the pure sky of his rhapsody at his piano. Ask the clear running stream its meaning; you will recognise the chance reflections of objects flitting over it, objects beautiful, fanciful, grotesque or low; but they are not the running stream. So in art; you may see all things, but not itself. Imitative music is sometimes wonderful, but it is not the highest. Music is essentially subjective, and mere musical imitations of objects are a prostitution of the art. They are not art, any more than the Daguerreotype is art. Curiosity is excited to hear the *Battle of Prague*, in Neukomm's Fantasia, on the organ, representing a concert on a lake interrupted by a storm. Such things can hardly entertain the lover of true music twice. Even Haydn's "*Creation*," by its literal imitations, sacrifices too much to effect. Schindler, the biographer of Beethoven, gives us an explanation, from the master himself, of one of his sonatas, and traces minutely through, from phrase to phrase, two answering parts, one pleading, the other angrily refusing, as if it were a quarrel

between two lovers, or between husband and wife. But from the lips of Beethoven himself, I would not accept so low an explanation. He told what he could, perhaps, but left the most untold, or never thought how much he meant. Could the story affect us like the music? Of no vulgar nature must the conflict be, which could be carried up into the pure realm of art and made immortal; — a conflict of ideal spirits, or of principles, or say, of the individual soul with Destiny, the music, the meanwhile, harmonizing all their wild, impatient outbreaks, that they may not go beyond the law of beauty, and thus predicting the sure and happy reconciliation. On another occasion, being asked the key to a sonata, he replied, “Read Shakspeare’s *Tempest*.” But he did not say, “It is a musical translation of the *Tempest*.” In vain will you endeavor to trace the story through it, save as you trace a vague and fanciful connection between the accidental figures in the veins of mahogany or marble. You cannot say, this represents the storm; this, the scolding of the boatswain; this, the uplifting of the magician’s wand; this, the pleading sympathy of Miranda; and this, the sudden flight and apparition of the tricky Ariel. All that, done ever so well, would have been but a musical curiosity. Our artist worked for no such end in this sonata. It was his own wild and glorious mood which he would utter and preserve in the immortal form of art. Would you know what wrought him up to such a pitch of feeling? “Read Shakspeare’s *Tempest*.” These strains are but the audible vibrations of his soul under the spell of that wild tale of elemental discord, wonder, love, and all-subduing justice; his rapturous response to the tones of another master mind. While you listen, your fancy will roam at large and recognise, *ad libitum*, full many a well-known face, — Ariels, and beautiful, or grotesque spirits without number, “music i’ the air,” Calibans and growling thunder, the whole isle shaking, waves roaring, clouds blackening, flames flickering on the tops of masts, soft sighs of love and compassion, and deep tones of fatherly wisdom, — but all indefinite, all in the vague, evanescent interminglings and successions of a dream. No regular synopsis could be given. Such is the difference between Art and Skill. And thus is Music, as an art, no parasite, living upon other arts, but endowed with an independent being, and entrusted with its own peculiar mission.

2. After what has now been said, it will be safe to speak of music as Language. It is a language. It is so independently of words. Indeed, all progress in musical taste brings with it a growing prefer-

ence for instrumental music over vocal. It compromises something of its own peculiar eloquence to even the most judicious union with poetry. I call it the language of *natural religion*, and class it among the evidences of our religious nature. It is the natural language of emotions and aspirations, which imply the existence of more than is seen, which press towards the heart of all things, and cannot bear to believe that nature is lifeless. There is most music where there is most of this spontaneous spirituality, where men are most conscious of the unseen world ; — not where men have most strictness of faith or observance, but where they live practically above what is narrowly called the Practical, and seem to know that they have souls to satisfy as well as bodies. It is the most intimate of languages. Two Germans, meeting after a long separation, would hardly feel that they had conversed, until they had made music together ; it would seem a cold meeting to them without that. And there is a certain rude *Æolian-harp* music running through Speech, which gives us our most intimate knowledge of one another. We learn more of a person from the tones in which he says a thing, than from the thing he says. His words convey a special meaning ; but the tones and modulations, the rhythm and quality of his voice, convey the whole spirit and character of the man to us. His words tell us what he means now ; his tones, what he means always, — not merely the meaning of what he is now stating, but the meaning of *him*. You need only catch the tones of a speaker in another room, where you can neither see him nor distinguish his words, to know just how refined, how calm, how generous he is, and whether he is a hopeful child and a believer, or a skeptical and politic man of tact.

3. And now for the Prophetic character of Music. I have called it the language of our presentiments. The communion which we enjoy through it is an intimation of the higher life into which this progressive organization of ours will unfold itself. Nay, it is itself, for the time being, the “substance of things hoped for.” It warns us of that essential harmony of things which our artificial ways disturb, and sings to us, for our comfort, that the broken fragments of the kingdom of heaven, as they lie about us here in the chaos of sin and strife, shall one day rise together into a fair, harmonious whole. In other words, music predicts the final reconciliation of the sacred and the secular in all things, the doing away of that distinction by the return of all things to their primitive and holy uses. And wherever true music, that reconciliation *has*, for the time being, taken

place. For music hallows even trivial occasions. It ennobles all it touches. It idealizes even the dance, and exalts it to the dignity of the dance of Miriam on the shore of the Red Sea. Pleasure is less dangerous, less sensual, less trivial, when music intellectualizes it. The believer in depravity, the strictest ascetic, will allow that "to the pure all things are pure," *were we* only pure. Now it is conceivable that the week might be as holy as the Sabbath; that man might glorify God with the labor of his hands, as well as in the sanctuary; that his talk with his brother might be communion; and that gayety and dancing might be, not a perversion and a wicked waste of life, but the innocent and trustful joy of grateful children beneath a Father's smile. So far as the legitimate influence of music goes, this thing is realized. The theatre is a better place when music from the heart is heard there. The dance becomes the poetry of motion when the music is not a mere tickler of the sense, but a graceful and exquisite work of art, speaking to the soul, like some of the happiest waltzes of Strauss or Laenner. A tender melancholy, as of moonlight and the flow of waters, comes over one sometimes in the mere music of the waltz. Does it not show how all things must be lifted up, and restored at last to their original sacredness? how this whole life, without losing any of its naturalness, must become a temple and an act of worship? And if musicians, the inspired masters of that guild, do degrade their genius to low subjects, give trivial names to their sublimest pieces, and herd with the profane, it proves only a false state of things, and that there ought not to be any profane. In *their* world, in their mysterious realm of music, which is their atmosphere, their life, and in which they are glorious, there is no secular, no sacred; all is soul and beauty; all is liberal, disinterested, pure; no doubt, no dogmatism can enter there; no selfishness, no grossness. Those are narrow, private faults, and music is a universal language. Those belong to men as they are; music belongs to humanity in its original. And he, who has most deeply felt the power of music, is most humbled by the thought of the lost brightness of his own original, and most yearns to realize the promised reconciliation of which I have spoken. A true lover of music must be in some sense a "perfectionist."

Yes! in music, if true to itself, there is nothing profane. It comes from above. It is a stray, reflected light from heaven, glancing about, here and there, over all the surface and the walls of this our earthly life, entering without fear each dull and vulgar haunt, — a

sort of revelation to the vulgar, that there is a capacity in him for something more. When shall *we* move as freely and as beneficently among our brethren, high or low, pure or tainted, and in all places, whether consecrated or not, as this heavenly benefactress moves among us? Does she not teach us that this divorce of secular from sacred, of nature from religion, is all wrong? Wherever a holy spirit comes, whether it comes in the shape of a good man, or of hallowed associations which hang around a church, or of a true strain of careless, wandering music, such as sometimes falls, like that stray sunbeam, into holes where only vice frequents, there, so long as it lingers, is the place made holy. All things may be exalted in this way. Have you not observed the effect of moonlight, how, with magic wand, she transforms the old white house into a marble palace, hides all the obtrusive and discordant features of the scene, and, with vague and delicate shading, brings out all its ideal beauty, turning the dirty village into a romantic, fairy spot? Music, too, is such a charmer. The profane thought forgets itself, when she approaches. Through the coarse, worldly features of the sensualist glows the expression of the future angel; he looks the nobler nature which he should be, while he hearkens, spell-bound, to her melodies.

What matter, then, if Handel's "Messiah," the sublimest work of the musical art, was written for the theatre? Does it smell of the theatre now? Does it suggest tinsel and spangles, and rouge for the face, and the smoke of foot-lamps? Is it not all pregnant with celestial meaning? Does it not acquaint us with the deepest humility, the purest exaltation which the human soul has ever known? Each successive performance of that oratorio fills the hearer with new wonder. One familiar at all with the processes and difficulties of musical art, cannot but feel, as he hears it, as if an impossibility had been achieved, something greater than a mere mortal could feel it in his limited nature to do. The music seems to have come from the same inspiration with the words which it embalms. Whatever the intellect may demand, the heart asks no better interpreter of those words than this music. Indeed, it seems as if every note were set by the same necessity of an all-wise will which set the stars; as if there were no room for choice, this being *the* music pre-ordained for this theme, so there could be no other. One who has heard it often, and has it all by heart, finds those old Hebrew sentences and the melodies of the modern artist growing inseparable in his mind, as if they belonged together from the first by right, and had come to us

separately by some mistake. Had I devoted this discourse exclusively to an attempt to do justice to the Oratorio of the Messiah, I might have succeeded better in unfolding the wealth, spirituality and dignity of the musical art by that single illustration, than by all the remarks which I have scattered over so much ground. The same I might do, were there any art of congealing the fluid spirit of music into words, with some one of the great triumphs of pure, or instrumental music, some symphony of Mozart or Beethoven. But time fails.

Permit me, gentlemen and brother amateurs of a noble art, to exhort you to cherish it in the spirit of art; to strive to penetrate into its hallowed depths; and to feel that, in practising or hearing noble music, you converse with a great and gifted mind through the purest medium of communication. Music, in this sense, becomes a study, not a pastime merely; a study like poetry, or any production of the mind. It contains somewhat which concerns us deeply as immortal beings. Can you not conceive that music, as well as poetry, might have its Shakspeare? that as gifted a soul as ever came from God might utter itself in music rather than in words? and that an acquaintance with such music might give us as much insight into the great problems of the soul as the "sublime dialogues" of Plato, or the "lofty rhyme" of Dante, or of Milton? This view of the art it becomes us, as amateurs and men pretending to what is called "an education," to diffuse. While others are engaged in laudable efforts to excite an interest in the letter, the scientific rudiments of music, and are multiplying academies and singing-schools, be it ours to endeavor to bring the nobler productions of the art within the hearing of the many; to promote a taste for something more than its grammatical common-places; to make Handel, Mozart and Beethoven appreciated and felt; to give dignity to the profession of the musical artist, making it understood that he, as well as the scholar and the poet, has to do with the noblest creations of the mind, and should not be looked down upon as a mere caterer to the lowest wants of the idle. Above all, be it ours to vindicate a place for music in the circle of liberal arts here fostered by our Alma-Mater, and to purchase for this neglected art an academic sanction.

